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580-CAGWU

3 July 1951

SUBJECT: Ogive/BGRhythm Infiltration, LCBatland

TO: Chief, BGRhythm
Washington, D. C.

Attn: []

Forwarded under separate cover is the debriefing report
of the Ogive infiltration effected 24 June 1951 by air drop
supplied by the BGRhythm, BGFriend covert crew.

Encl. as indicated (s.c.)

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MEMORANDUM

26 June 1951

SUBJECT: CSO/OPC Infiltration, Albania, 24 June 1951

TO: Acting Project Chief, BGFland

FROM: Intelligence, BGFland

1. The seven-man CSO team was dropped into a pre-selected target area near Shkujbe, Albania, by the OPC covert air crew at 0210 hours local on 24 June 1951 in a mission entirely without incident. Weather enroute and over the dropping ground was CAVU; the utter clearness of visibility, vertical, forward, and oblique elicited optimum brightness from the half-moon that made every ground detail sharply visible.

2. Take-off from Athens occurred at 2310 hours on 23 June 1951 after a 40-minute delay considered minor; more time was needed than thought necessary to clothe and rig the infiltrees. Climbing to 6,000 feet indicated altitude, the aircraft proceeded on course through the Gulf of Corinth, then west of Corfu to a position 40° 30' N 41° 30' E. At 0139 hours the true heading was changed to 55° and a descent to 1500' ASL commenced. The Albanian coast was penetrated at the southern tip of Shkumbi Peninsula at 0203 hours at 1500' indicated altitude. The aircraft crossed the village of Divjake and the northern quarter of Liqen i Terbufit (lake), and, on a true heading of 100°, flew directly to the drop area.

3. At first, the DZ was given as the 283 meter height immediately east, perhaps a mile, from the huts at Shkujbe, itself 3 miles north of Lushnje. However, a final decision by the CSO Conducting Officer and the Team Leader before take-off moved the target to the southern base of the 283 meter hill where a plateau 3 miles long and 2 miles wide was described to exist. The actual DZ, rather than a flat plateau, was an East-West valley 4 to 5 miles long between three rolling rises and the 283 meter slope further north. This was the configuration presented from 600 feet above the terrain flying generally from west to east. Incidentally, the team expressed its desire to be dropped on the southerly approach to the pinpoint height on which they planned to establish their first base. The selected area was free of trees, rocks, and any drop obstructions.

4. The dropping ground was quickly identified (by the air crew, and by Team Member No. 1 who recognized all of the area from the shore inland). Steady moonlight outlined the streams, roads, fields, woods, lakes, and land shapes vividly. A 180° turn from the DZ brought the aircraft over the eastern tip of Liqen i Terbufit to the DZ on a true heading of 100° at 600 feet above the ground. Two containers and seven men dropped at 0210 hours in one pass. Bundles and bodies were discharged under 20 seconds.

5. Dispatchers A and B each tossed a bundle on signal. The No. 1 man and the next three jumped headfirst almost atop the containers. No. 5 quickly sat on the floor, legs out the doorway, and pushed himself into the air. No. 6 immediately dived out, and the last man followed in the same manner after a fraction's hesitation. No prompting was needed from either dispatcher.

/6. The drop was

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6. The drop was effected in the elongated valley between points parallel to the first and second ridges of the north-south heights that were to the right of the eastbound run. Since the briefing did not include safe-landing signals, none were observed. No parachutes in the air or on the ground were seen. The aircraft continued on a course altered to 70° for Elbasan, ascending from the drop to 2000 feet ASL. Approaching Shkël, several packets of leaflets, perhaps 5,000 were released at 0217 hours. Three minutes later Elbasan was circled to the right and treated to some 15,000 leaflets. The course coastward was set at 220° to intersect Muriz 3½ air miles from the junction of the Devoll and Semani rivers at 0229 hours. At that point, the outbound course was changed to 255°. Approximately 5,000 more leaflets were scattered in the populated vicinity of Brostar on the Semani River at 0233 hours. The coast was crossed just north of the Vjosa River mouth at 0237 hours, and the flight proceeded to 40° 30' N 41° 30' E where reciprocal headings were flown homeward. The aircraft landed at Athens at 0905. Total time of flight: 5 hours 55 minutes; time of drop: 0210 hours; time over Albania: 34 minutes.

7. At about 1½ miles northwest of Lushnje a large, rectangular pattern of strong, evenly spaced lights was observed. Like the same patterns seen on other Albanian missions and reported in BGFriend debriefings, this light figure hinted at a special area, not unlike the concentration camps that often were used as pinpoints in Germany during the last war. A similar but smaller rectangle of lights was plotted at Bishkem on the Shkumbi River. Lights were bright in Durres and Vlone; except for the special area, all Lushnje was blacked out.

8. One faint light, possibly a shepherd's fire, was seen over a mile from the DZ (west of the first slope beyond which the drop was made); all else was black in the general region.

9. The aircraft crew reported that all team members behaved well during the flight. All men sat upright and awake. The air was notably smooth and no one became ill. There was some singing and a considerable amount of smoking. Five minutes before the Albanian coast was crossed the door was unfastened and the static lines readied. All but Nos. 6 and 7 took a drink of cognac. No. 1, recognising his whereabouts, pointed out known landmarks to others as the terrain unfolded below. The group was adjudged unusually good. The manner and rate of jumping was deemed exceptional - there were no noticeable worries, mainly noticeable confidence.

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